

The President's Daily Brief

7 October 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Jordan

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The South Vietnamese Army has begun an offensive against long-time Communist base areas in the delta provinces. (*Page 3*)

assessment of the military situation on Cambodia's Route 6 and around the capital appears on *Page 5*.

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BOLIVIA

Military officers who ousted President Ovando yesterday are facing a serious challenge from forces led by General Juan Jose Torres. Operating from El Alto Air Force Base just outside La Paz, Torres yesterday demanded that he be recognized as president of a "revolutionary government" to succeed Ovando. Torres, who was removed as armed forces commander last July because of objections to his leftist tendencies, has the support of the air force, most of the 800-man presidential guard regiment, and a battalion of elite paratroops flown in from Cochabamba, Bolivia's second city. He has also gained the support of leftist student and labor leaders, who have called for a general strike to begin today. Yesterday Torres directed a token bombing and strafing of the presidential palace to show that he could and would use force.

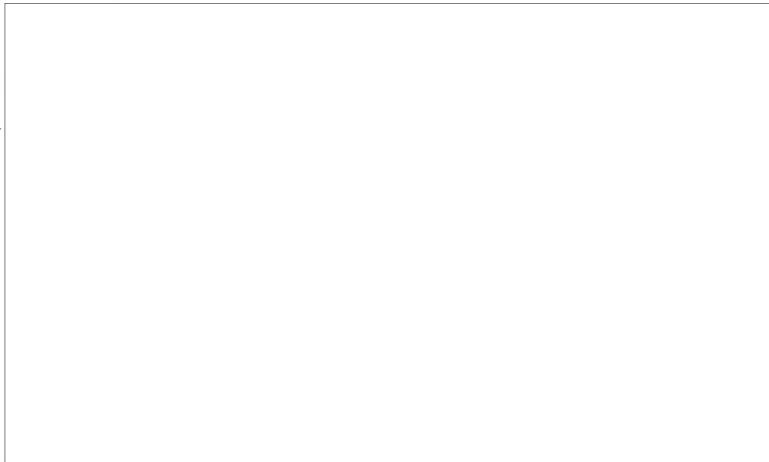
Earlier in the day General Miranda, who led the ouster of Ovando, stepped down as army commander after naming a junta composed of the chiefs of the three services in an apparent attempt to pacify troops opposed to his assumption of power. The army junta member, Efrain Guachalla, appointed a predominantly military cabinet, indicated that the new government would not retract measures taken by Ovando, and announced that elections would be held by the end of 1972. Late last night, however, the air force commander reportedly resigned his position on the junta, placing the longevity of this government in serious doubt.

The balance of power appears to favor the Miranda forces. They control most of the military units in the La Paz area, have brought in reinforcements from outside the capital, and reportedly are moving into position for an attempt to seize El Alto. Torres' hopes for winning out appear to depend heavily on the success of the student and labor leaders in attracting active, massive support for his cause.

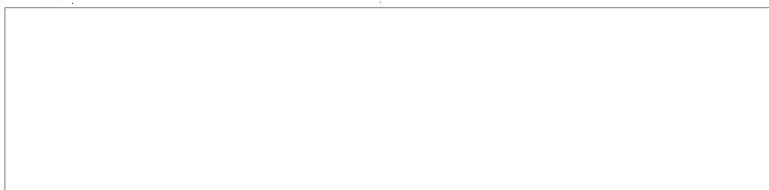
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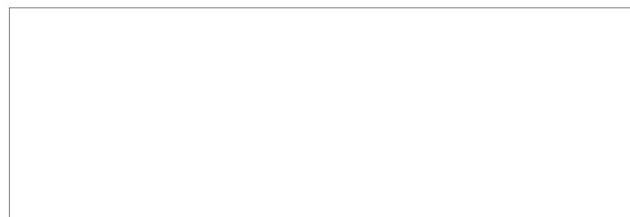
JORDAN



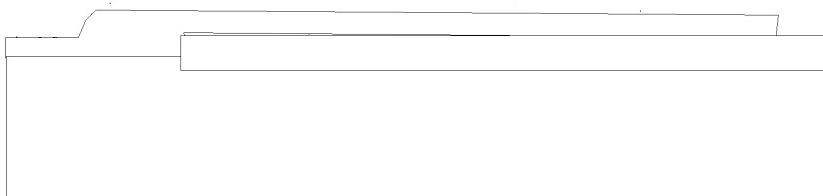
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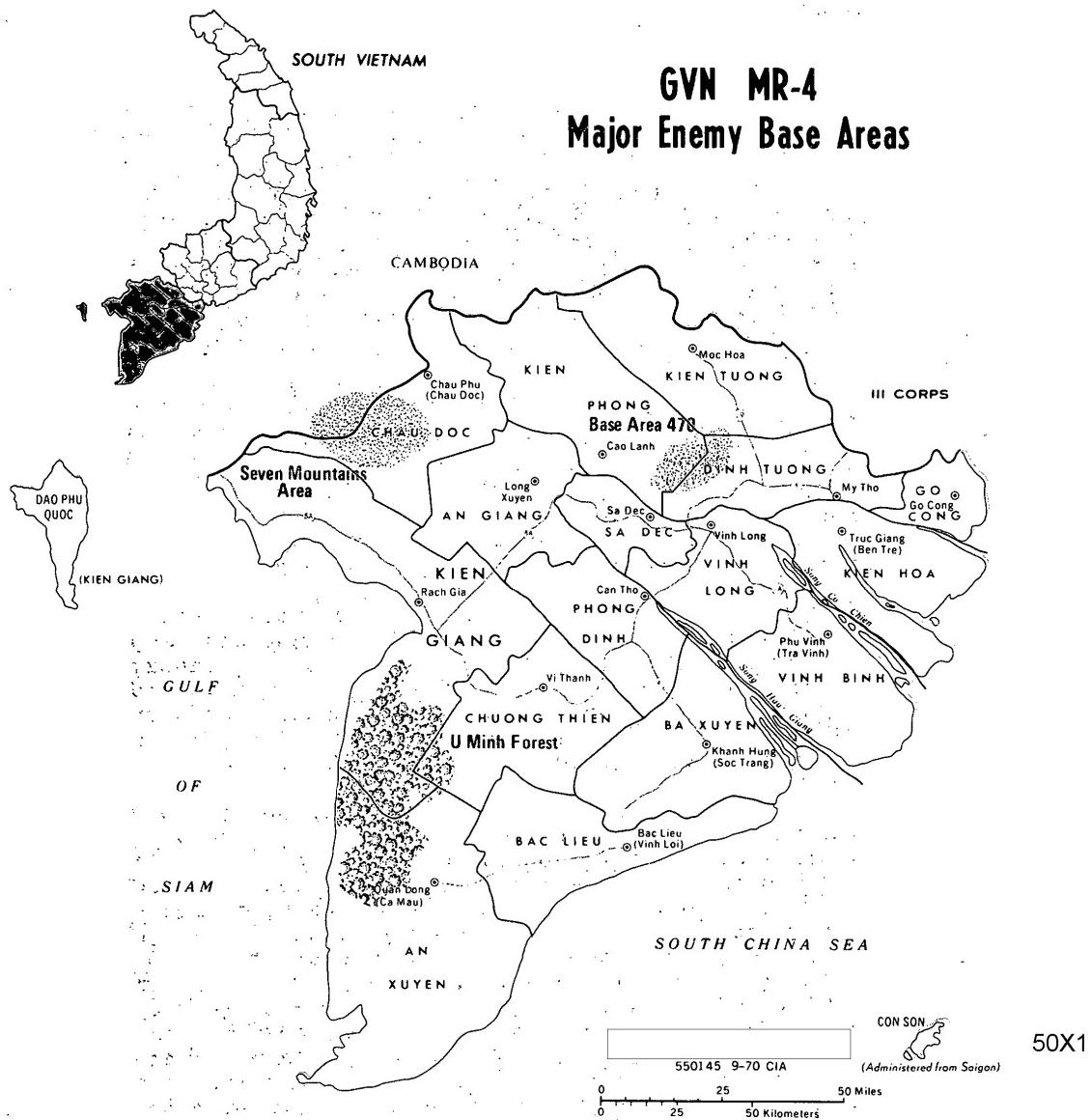
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SOUTH VIETNAM

The South Vietnamese Army has begun new offensive operations against long-time Communist base areas in the delta provinces south of Saigon. Senior officers of the army's 7th and 9th divisions report that they have already begun implementing some of the aggressive tactics of the new Military Region 4 commander, General Truong, who was recently transferred from the northern provinces. Employing Truong's fire support base concept, two regiments of the 7th Division have been tasked with establishing permanent positions deep within the Communists' Base Area 470 in the swampy region of western Dinh Tuong and eastern Kien Phong provinces. In Chau Doc Province, the 9th Division has also sent upwards of three regiments into the Seven Mountains area with the objective of driving the North Vietnamese 18B Regiment and supporting units from this key enemy safehaven on the South Vietnamese - Cambodian border.

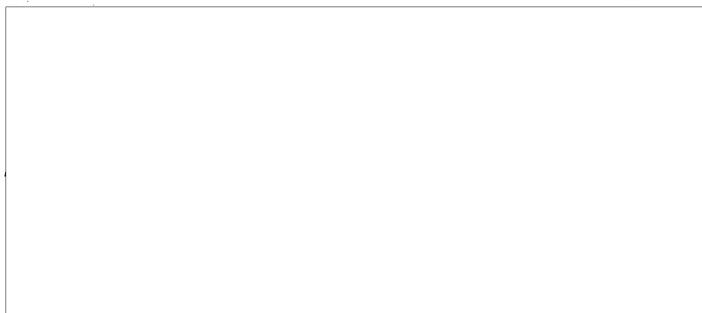
Although Communist forces are not up to full combat strength and food and supply shortages have increased in recent months, the terrain offers a defensive advantage for the enemy. The South Vietnamese commanders, including General Truong, acknowledge that these operations will be costly, but believe that aggressive operations will boost the morale of government forces in the area.

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CAMBODIA

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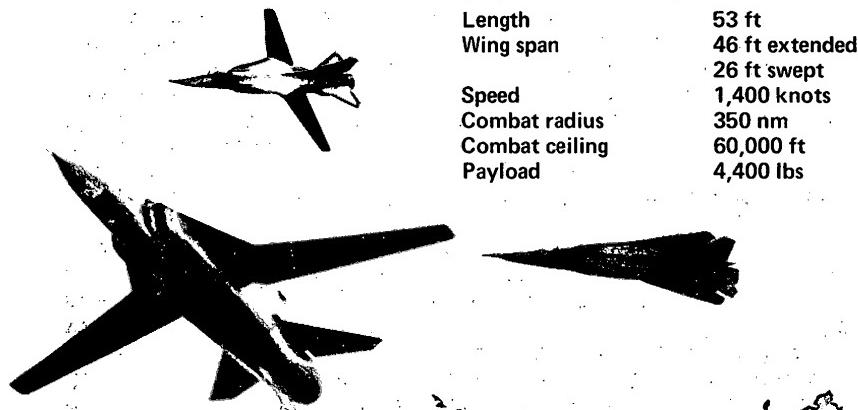
--The government column in the Chenla operation on Route 6 may soon come under heavier enemy pressure. The column is well spread out, with troops deployed to its front, rear, and flanks. If it tries to move beyond Tang Kouk, it is likely to encounter Communist forces equipped with antiaircraft weapons. Unless suppressed by close air support, the enemy could use such weapons to rake the government column along an area where lateral movement is difficult because of flooding on both sides of the road. An attack from the rear, or on its flanks with its rear blocked, would also put the column in "serious difficulties." The movement of elements of the North Vietnamese 174th Regiment into an area east of the column, reports of increased enemy supply movements, and various unconfirmed reports of a buildup south of the column, all indicate that the enemy may be taking steps to isolate the column, perhaps before making a flank attack in force against it.

--The approximately 3,000 enemy troops in the general area probably are not enough to overrun the column, however. The morale of the Cambodian soldiers is still high, and they reportedly are getting good intelligence on Communist movements from local villagers. The column itself probably will hold its positions, which, on balance, are better than the enemy's. A heavy firefight could develop and bring substantial losses on both sides.

--There are still no signs that the Communists will make an assault on the capital itself. Enemy forces continue to move with relative ease around Phnom Penh, but Cambodian estimates of the strength and intentions of these forces probably are quite exaggerated. The most likely enemy actions against the city include continuing harassment in its outlying areas, the initiation of occasional incidents within the city proper, and possible mortar or rocket attacks.

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Soviets Have Problems with Swing-wing Flogger Fighter Aircraft



Length	53 ft
Wing span	46 ft extended, 26 ft swept
Speed	1,400 knots
Combat radius	350 nm
Combat ceiling	60,000 ft
Payload	4,400 lbs



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USSR

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[redacted] two of the new Flogger swing-wing fighters crashed recently on separate test flights near the Ramenskoye test center outside Moscow. Deployment of the Flogger to operational units had already begun prior to the crashes, after an unusually short developmental period. The loss of two aircraft flown by experienced test pilots suggests problems of a magnitude beyond the sort normally encountered after a new aircraft has gone into service. The wing of one of the planes apparently failed after engine problems resulted in excessive speed.

The Flogger is expected eventually to supplant the MIG-21 Fishbed as the Soviets' primary tactical fighter and export aircraft. The Mach-2.3 aircraft is faster and is estimated to perform better at low altitudes than the MIG-21. The swing-wing design gives it the capability to operate from airstrips shorter than those required by fighters now in service.

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NOTE

Egypt: Cairo's announcement of its willingness to accept a three-month extension of the cease-fire suggests that Egyptian leaders are seeking a breathing period in which to adjust to their new circumstances without Nasir. Foreign Minister Riad indicated that the extension depends upon continued efforts to implement the UN Security Council resolution on the Middle East of 1967, and on the resumption of UN mediator Jarring's mission. Many Egyptians are not anxious for a renewal of active hostilities with Israel. Moreover, an extension of the cease-fire would put off having to decide whether or not to resume Nasir's war of attrition until the political situation in Cairo is somewhat stabilized.

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